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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#) [SN](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: JAPAN CONSIDERING AID REDUCTION FOLLOWING  
YABUNAKA'S BURMA TRIP

Classified By: Charge D' Affairs Joseph R. Donovan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka met with Deputy Foreign Minister U Maung Myint, Ministry of Defense Acting Deputy Chief of the Office of Military Security Affairs (OCMSA) Colonel Aye Ko, and Minister of Information Brigadier-General Kyaw Hsan on October 1. According to MOFA First Southeast Asian Division Principal Deputy Director Atsushi Kuwabara, Yabunaka urged them to exercise self-restraint when responding to protesters, pushed for the release of political prisoners, including Aung Sang Suu Kyi, and emphasized the need for Burmese leaders to engage in dialogue with pro-democracy groups. Yabunaka expressed deep concern over the death of the Japanese journalist killed in Burma on September 27 and called on Burmese officials to return his camera and video to his family. The Burmese officials listened to his message and explained their own "roadmap to democracy" for Burma. They insisted, at some times with deep emotion, that the demonstrators in Burma were started by foreign protestors.

¶2. (SBU) After meeting with Yabunaka on October 3, Foreign Minister Komura spoke, saying that Japan will consider "ways to narrow humanitarian assistance." Komura stated it would not be appropriate to stop humanitarian assistance such as polio vaccines, but said Japan may consider suspending some aid projects "for the time being." (Note: MOFA is now using the term "humanitarian assistance" in the present situation, unlike previously when it referred to "ODA to Myanmar.")

¶3. (C) ODA to Burma in 2006-07 was approximately USD 30 million per year, while from April 2005 to March 2006, ODA to Burma was USD 25.68 million, with grant aid comprising USD 6.65 million and technical cooperation USD 19.03 million. Repayment of yen loans, last made in 1987, was USD 190,000. In late April 2007 at the end of FY2006, Toru Maeda, then Director of the MOFA First Assistance Planning Division, told AID Counselor that MOFA plans to provide USD 30-33 million for the next few years unless there are significant changes.

¶4. (SBU) Present ODA projects include: Project for the Afforestation in the Dry Zone; Human Resource Development Scholarships Project; Myanmar-Japan Center for Human Resource Development; Strengthening Child-Centered Approach in the Union of Myanmar (Education); Major Infectious Diseases Control Project; The Eradication of Opium Poppy Cultivation and Poverty Reduction Project in Kokang Special Region; Ayayawady Delta Integrated Mangrove Rehabilitation and Management Project; the Joint Research Project on Traditional Medicines; Project on ICT Human Resource Development at ICT Training Institute; Reproductive Health Project; and Rural

Water Supply Technology in the Central Dry Zone. These projects are complemented by Grant Aid for NGOs and the Embassy's Grassroots Grants.

15. (C) In the wake of the murder of Japanese photo journalist Kenji Nagai, the Diet and the public are calling into question Japan's ODA to Burma. MOFA First Assistance Planning Division Director Kozo Honsei told AID Counselor on October 5 that MOFA is preparing responses to the Diet concerning all present ODA projects. Honsei said that Japan will not pursue the construction of the Cultural Center in Rangoon as planned, and he expressed relief that Japan and Burma had not exchanged notes on this ODA projects, thus making it easy to postpone or cancel it. Honsei also said that MOFA will be limiting the entry of Burmese public servants into Japan and freezing the scholarship and training program of government officials. He said that the "termination or postponement of other projects will depend upon how well MOFA responds to the Diet, the political parties especially the DPJ, and to the public at large." He added that the return of journalist Nagai's video camera will also influence ODA decisions.

DONOVAN